

heritage of the Church of England to any mere section within it. It also bears promise of the revival of interest in theological matters within evangelical quarters. This interest is what has been so sadly lacking during recent years. Indeed, it would be difficult to name any work of outstanding importance in the development of English theology which has been written by an evangelical Anglican in the last fifty years. Let us hope that the Report proves to be a harbinger of better things to come.

Three Years of Church Union

BY THE REV. L. W. BROWN, B.D., M.Th.

I HAVE been asked to give a factual report of the first three years of the Church of South India. I can write with only a limited knowledge, but my impression is that we are finding the meaning of unity much more rapidly than any of us ever anticipated. It is wrong to speak of 'achieving unity'. The unity of the Church consists in the fact that we are already one in Christ; what we have to do is to understand more and more of the implications of that fact. In this sense the three years have seen a deepening in unity. They have also seen the beginnings of wider unity in that we are seeking the way in which others at present outside our fellowship may enter it, so that we may realise together our common discipleship.

I

The first Synod of the Church, held in March, 1948, inherited the enthusiasm of the Joint Committee and of the wonderful services of Inauguration in Madras the previous September. Everyone who came was still wondering at the fact that we were together in one Church. We passed a resolution affirming that evangelism was the primary task of the Church and went on to approve machinery by which inherited missionary activities and the different ways of administration of all sides of church life could be co-ordinated and become activities of the one Church. There was little argument and no issues which raised special difficulty, and the whole meeting was a great spiritual experience for all who took part in it.

The second Synod in March, 1950, was confronted with grave and difficult problems. Its members were no longer on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm and joy which had swept them along to the first Synod. The Nandyal problem was in everyone's mind, and a good deal of canvassing was carried on by the group which was supporting Bishop Joseph against the decision of the Synod Court. It is difficult to state this problem in a few lines, and my knowledge of it is not first-hand. Just before union, when the appointment of Canon Bunyan Joseph as bishop of the new diocese of Anantapur-Kurnool was announced, a party who were not on good terms with some of the Bishop's relations and supporters, and who were moreover unwilling to break the connection with S.P.G. which they had just learned would

be involved in adhesion to the new Church, decided not to join. They described themselves as the orthodox S.P.G. Church, and a few priests who had already accepted the Constitution of the C.S.I. withdrew their names so that they might continue to minister to the dissentient group. Thus when the Church was inaugurated, the result in the Nandyal Archdeaconry was to divide the Christians between the Bishop's supporters in the C.S.I. and the S.P.G. group, who continued to be Anglicans and for whose oversight a Commissary was sent by the Metropolitan. In some places congregations themselves were divided between the two groups, which had separate services at different times in the same church. The Commissary claimed all S.P.G. property and the C.S.I. authorities agreed to hand it over. Bishop Joseph refused to obey, and after several efforts to win his co-operation had failed, he was eventually deprived of his jurisdiction by the Court of the Synod, an action which the Synod itself confirmed. The quarrel did not start at the time of Union : the two parties were in existence for some years before it ; but the inauguration of the Church gave it a superficial respectability, and made it appear that the dispute was over serious doctrinal matters. It shows no signs of being healed, in spite of the understanding and close co-operation between the present Commissaries of the C.S.I. and the Church of India. There are now three groups, the S.P.G., the C.S.I., and the followers of Bishop Joseph who have refused to accept the decisions of their Church.

When the Synod had to deal with this most difficult problem, feelings ran high and there seemed real danger that a pressure group would succeed in influencing the attitude of the whole Church ; but this was averted and real unanimity gained among all except Bishop Joseph's immediate supporters, so that on the whole the Nandyal problem has been of value in uniting the C.S.I., and preventing it from thinking that real unity is easily achieved. The problem remains acute and is most distressing. It is sad but instructive to note that since this trouble started there has been practically no evangelistic work by either party.

At the same Synod other difficult questions brought the same response of a united attitude. The Convocations of England had asked certain questions of the C.S.I., and when they were discussed by the Faith and Order Committee of the Church (which consists of all the Bishops and seven theologians) it was impossible to tell the tradition of the speakers from the opinions they expressed. We were able to give a completely united reply to the English questions. The questions and our replies, with other important statements, are printed in the Convocation Report on the Church of South India.

So too in the field of missionary work ; before Union the various parts of the South Indian Church had carried on their own projects of evangelism : Tinnevely had worked in Dornakal, the Methodists had two important fields, Travancore had a Mission in Hyderabad State, and the S.I.U.C. had newly started missionary work in Papua. Now all these scattered efforts were brought together and described in a unified statement, and a sense of corporate responsibility began to be born. The most spectacular field is perhaps Papua because it

is outside India, and we are beginning to talk in terms of expansion and sending more men there.

II

One outward sign of the degree of unity to which we have come was the Communion Service of the Synod. It had been the intention of the C.S.I. that all congregations should continue to use the forms of worship to which they were accustomed before Union for an indefinite period, and there was no suggestion that we should at once try to draw up forms of service of our own. But dioceses like Madras, in which many traditions were represented, found that when they came together for a diocesan occasion, they wished to use an order of service for Holy Communion which did not remind them of their old divisions, but expressed their present oneness in Christ. The Working Committee of Synod therefore asked the Liturgy Committee to draw up a suitable service. The first question was whether we should adapt an existing rite, as had been done in the case of the Ordination Service. If we had done so it would have been an adaptation of the Prayer Book Service, since that is in regular use by about two-thirds of our membership (ex-Anglicans and ex-Methodists). This suggestion was not accepted and we were asked to prepare an entirely new service which should include as far as possible elements from all the traditions which had come together. The service was drawn up with the help of scholars from many parts of the world, and in consultation with Christians from all parts of the C.S.I. It is now being translated into the local languages and is already widely accepted and used. It is obtainable in England from the C.M.S. Book Room. Another form of service accepted for experimental use by the Synod was a form of Confirmation. This was produced in answer to the request of the Church of India. They were anxious to accept confirmation administered in the C.S.I. by a bishop but wished to be sure that the form he used would be adequate.

Since the Synod, the sense of unity has found expression particularly in the development of united theological education. Bangalore College now has the Anglican tradition represented on its staff and theological schools to serve the Tamil and Telugu areas are being built up on a united basis in the old Anglican schools of Tinnevely and Dornakal. The United School in the Malayalam area started four years before Union as an experiment, but is now firmly established and has won the confidence of the churches it serves. From these theological schools the clergy of the Church will go out with real knowledge and understanding of all the traditions found in their areas, and gradually local congregations will come to share the enrichment which has come to all who have had this experience. Unity has made a great difference, chiefly to the leaders of the Church; in many village areas the Christian congregations for miles around are all of one tradition, and in such circumstances union does not seem to make much difference. But in most village churches it is the custom for representatives who have attended diocesan councils, or Synods of the whole Church, to report fully to the congregation before or after the sermon on the Sunday after the meeting, and in this way even remote villages come

to know something of the problems confronting the whole Church. A very interesting fact which shows the reality of what has happened is that Nagercoil, a very large congregation of strong Independent tradition, has called as its new pastor a man who has spent his life in the Anglican ministry.

Before Union each section of the Church had its own organisation for women's work, and in some cases gave a recognised status (as, e.g., deaconesses in the Anglican tradition) to some workers. There is now a Women's Fellowship for the whole Church, with a Mothers' Union as a special section within it. The first steps are being taken towards creating an order for full-time women workers within the Church, and already a house has been opened to serve as headquarters in Bangalore. The action of the Mothers' Union in England in withdrawing from South India has caused bewilderment and great sadness to the thousands there who have for many years been loyal and devoted members of it.

III

The area of unity has also been extended in the three years since the Inauguration. At that time one Council of the S.I.U.C. refused to come into the new Church. They were afraid that their Congregational principles would be overruled, and that they would lose the freedom they prized to conduct their own affairs. But after watching the experiment for two years they asked to come in, and on the third anniversary of the Inauguration they were constituted as a diocese, and the bishop they have chosen, himself an ex-Anglican, was consecrated. A very encouraging fact was the recognition of our Orders by the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, and the setting up of committees by the two Churches to consider together all matters of mutual interest.

At the first Synod invitations were sent to other evangelical churches working in South India to discuss the possibility of entering into negotiations for organic union. The Lutheran and Baptist bodies accepted this invitation and as a result of our discussions, agreed statements have been produced on the relation of creeds and confessions to the faith of the Church and on the Lord's Supper. Other reports on Sacraments and Baptism are in preparation. It is unlikely that the Baptists will go forward to negotiate with us for union at present because of their very strong Independent tradition in government, but there seems real hope that the Lutherans may do so.

One Anglican congregation refused to enter the Union and has continued under the supervision of the Metropolitan, although presbyters of the C.S.I. have ministered to it. This congregation has now passed a unanimous resolution at its Church meeting asking to join the C.S.I.

It is difficult to speak so generally of the life of the Church without over-simplification, but I think that the great majority of members of C.S.I. realise much more what unity really means than they did three years ago, and are much more certain that what we did then was in accordance with God's will. It is certainly an incalculable gain to the Church to be independent of control by foreign missions boards and committees at a time when Free India is inevitably suspicious of

attempts by foreigners to dominate or control. A great obstacle to evangelism has been removed by this transfer of all effective control of policy to the Indian Church itself.

The Challenge of the Ecumenical Movement

BY THE REV. W. H. MURRAY WALTON, M.A.

BY sheer force of necessity the Ecumenical Movement to-day has forced itself into the forefront of Christian thinking and planning. In face of the quite open challenge now made to their Faith, Christians cannot afford to be weakened by divisions and over-concerned with lesser things. Church co-operation may indeed almost claim prior place to denominational loyalties.

Now this Movement is one which should have a special appeal to Evangelicals; for they of the three schools of thought in the Church of England can justly claim to have done more than any other to further co-operation between the churches, certainly overseas, and in particular so far as the non-episcopal churches are concerned. As therefore the ecumenical movement grows and broadens, it constitutes a real challenge to Evangelicals to continue to play their full part and not allow any craven fear or policy of safety-first to prevent their going into it whole-heartedly and pulling their full weight. For in the unfolding situation they have a God-given opportunity of making a very vital contribution to the whole matter of inter-Church relationships.

But what exactly is meant by the ecumenical movement? Is it the same as the reunion of the Churches? Or is it another term for inter-church co-operation? Or is it some new-fangled idea emanating from America, which calls for a vast expenditure of time and money on lesser matters while the supreme task of winning the world for Christ remains undone? In short, is ecumenicity really necessary? May I try to answer this question by a bit of personal experience, which I hope will lift the whole subject out of the realm of theory into that of practical realities?

I

When we first went to Japan under C.M.S. we were located to Hiroshima, at that time a city of some 160,000 inhabitants—it was double that size when the atomic bomb was dropped. We found ourselves attached to a small Anglican church in the centre of the town, with a missionary as priest in charge and a Japanese catechist. Within a radius of half a mile there was a Methodist church, a Presbyterian church, a Congregational church, a Roman Catholic church, a Seventh Day Adventist church, a church belonging to one of the newer sects from the U.S.A., and a Salvation Army Citadel; and a year or two later the Baptists joined in—nine churches and all, for